DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 347 633 EA 024 061

AUTHOR Baker, Esther J.
TITLE Does Inservice Make a Difference? A Way To Measure whether Teachers Are Using What They Learn in Inservice.
PUB DATE 92
NOTE 14p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Washington Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development (Seattle, WA, January 31-February 2, 1992).
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Faculty Development; *Inservice Education; Language Experience Approach; Primary Education; Professional Continuing Education; *Professional Development; *Program Effectiveness; Reading Instruction; Teacher Improvement; *Whole Language Approach; Writing Instruction
IDENTIFIERS *Battle Ground School District WA

ABSTRACT

Findings from a study that sought to determine the degree to which teachers used an inservice program for the implementation of a primary language and literacy program are presented in this paper. To measure teachers' level of use of the whole language philosophy of learning, the Language and Literacy Questionnaire was administered to 112 primary teachers in 6 schools in the Battle Ground, Washington, school district. Findings indicate that 99 percent of the teachers read aloud to their students daily (or nearly every day) and had developed their classroom read-aloud program to the routine level of use. However, they exhibited a low level of use regarding the element of guided reading. Teachers ranked in the 80th or 90th percentiles for 8 of the 10 elements of the whole language program. Five figures are included. (5 references) (LMI)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED347633

Does Inservice Make a Difference?

A way to measure whether teachers are using what they learn in inservice.

by
Esther J. Baker
Director of Elementary Education
Battle Ground School District
Battle Ground, WA 98604
Work: (206) 687-6516
Home: (206) 253-4878

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
✓ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
E. Baker
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

No one can fault educators for being reluctant to implement new ideas and programs. We seem to be proficient at initiating change, but problems arise when long-term facilitation of change is required. A landslide of material suggests that several years of support may be needed in order for teachers to fully grasp the philosophical direction and strategies necessary to institutionalize change.[1] In addition, the long range maintenance of change depends on a staff development plan augmented by inservice specifically designed to meet the needs of teachers.[2] The implementation and institutionalization of new programs has become as vast as building and maintaining the New York City bridges. Many short-term, dead-end curriculum adoptions have been stored in the archives, for better or worse, but for good.

In the Battle Ground Public Schools, the primary grades Language and Literacy Committee (evolving both in title and vision from the Reading Enrichment Committee) was determined not to let up on supplying the support needed to make substantive change in the reading, writing, speaking and listening programs. The process began six years ago with teachers wanting to use additional children's literature to enrich the use of the basal text. Numerous inservice opportunities have since been held to assist teachers to learn the elements of a whole language program. Teachers have become increasingly enthusiastic about teaching literature-based reading and the writing process.

Time has passed and whole language literacy has swept like a forest fire through the schools: in some teachers the fire has burned passionately, in others it singed only the edges and created interest, and some teachers were left untouched. During the spring of 1990, the task of scheduling inservice for the following school year became difficult. After five years of emphasis, there was significant acceptance and use. It was no longer

EA 024 061

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

possible to determine the type of inservice needed for the majority of teachers; the needs had become too diverse.

In their book, **Taking Charge of Change**, Hord, et al, describe just such dilemmas facing facilitators of change. They provide "some basic understandings and skills to facilitate change." One of the tools of their Concerns Based Adoption Model (CBAM), the "Levels of Use of an Innovation in Classrooms (LoU)" (See Figure 1), discusses the stage of implementation in which things are going pretty well and the program has widespread acceptance, but where teachers' use of the program is varied. In this scenario, there is also noticeable variation of use among the schools.[3]

Since the intent of the Language and Literacy Committee was to provide long term support, the "Levels of Use of an Innovation" (LoU) seemed to be a timely vehicle for gathering data and providing inservices now appropriate for the specific and broadening needs of the teachers. Hord, et al, provide a description of a focused interview and observation process that allows a researcher to gather information. The authors are straightforward in their statement that a questionnaire has not yet been developed that accurately assesses LoU. In spite of this position, the notion of a questionnaire was intriguing. The possibility that a questionnaire could be developed asking teachers to identify their LoU seemed like the answer to our dilemma. The questionnaire in Figure 2 was then developed. The first task was to select a credible knowledge base defining whole language literacy. Rigby Press distributes a set of video tapes by Andrea Butler, a well known author and teacher of whole language, which includes a tape entitled, "The Elements of a Whole Language Program," that provides the consistent knowledge base needed for the questionnaire (See Figure 3).[4 4]

To provide consistency in the administration of the questionnaire, it was introduced and presented by the curriculum coordinator during a staff meeting at each primary school. Initially, a brief explanation of the purpose of the questionnaire was given. Teachers were assured that the questionnaire would be used for the purpose of designing the staff development agenda and not for the evaluation of any individual teacher. They were also encouraged not to put their names on the forms but to give some code such as the last four digits of their social security number in order to later identify their questionnaire. They were also told that upon the return of the administrator in a few months, they would be shown how to develop an individual profile.

Considerable time was given to coverage of the "Elements of A Whole Language Program." Teachers were urged to use the definitions presented even though they may have had different working definitions of their own. Next, a brief explanation of the LoU was given. Teachers were not expected to retain any information about LoU but to simply understand that there is a research base for development of the questionnaire.

The format of the questionnaire was then explained. It was easy for teachers to grasp the format: there is a page corresponding to each of the ten elements of a whole language program and each question corresponds to a level of use. Overall, teachers in all six primary schools responded with interest. One teacher remarked that by administering the instrument, "the district" was expressing its expectations of teachers. Although this seemed to be a side effect, it was not an intended result.

The results for each building and the district were aggregated into spread sheets (See Figure 4) which showed the number and percentage indicating their LoU. From the results, it was apparent that the inservice and development work done in certain areas had made a positive impact. For example, Yacolt Primary School had received a practioner's grant and developed a school-wide read aloud program. The essence of the program was for all children to have listened to a core collection of quality children's literature read aloud by the time they finished fourth grade. Because the program was so successful at Yacolt School, the other five primary schools invited Yacolt staff to teach the mechanics of the program to them. Thus, all six primary schools in three years time had developed their own read aloud program.

The results in this area of the LoU questionnaire indicated that 99% of the teachers were reading aloud to their students every (or nearly every) day. It also showed that teachers seemed to have developed their classroom read aloud program to the routine level. Further inservice with professional storytellers modeling read aloud technique would likely assist teachers to move to a higher LoU.

Likewise, with the element of guided reading, the data showed that teachers were functioning on a low level of use. Combined with input from principals and the Language and Literacy Committee, a decision was made to concentrate the year's inservice on guided reading strategies. By definition, this is the prime teaching time in reading and requires continuous professional development. Dr. Nancy Johnson, assistant professor at Seattle Pacific University, was asked to provide a Saturday for

teaching guiding reading strategies. Seventy of the 112 primary teachers attended this workshop.

The primary principals and the Language and Literacy Committee continue to review and interpret the data collected from the questionnaire. All groups feel that the data is helpful in measuring the teachers' LoU of the whole language philosophy of learning. Perhaps the most worthwhile result has been the individual profile developed and administered several months after the questionnaire (See Figure 5). The original completed questionnaire was returned to each teacher in a faculty meeting and an individual profile sheet was handed out along with it. Teachers were given a more extensive explanation of the LoU. They were then asked to go through their own questionnaire and plot their answers as given several months before. As the teachers were doing this a common question was asked, "Do I fill this out based on where I am now, or where I was last spring when I filled this out?" The teachers were again asked to complete the individual profile sheet based on their answers from the questionnaire taken the prior spring. Many remarked, "In that case, I have changed by light years!"

The teachers were encouraged to commend themselves and their colleagues for their growth in learning. The individual profile gave them an opportunity to quantify their professional development. There was much delight and excitement experienced in those moments when the teachers became aware that their efforts had paid off.

The Language and Literacy Questionnaire has been effective for obtaining several results: 1) quantifying the LoU of the elements of a whole language program,. 2) defining a knowledge base for the whole language philosophy of learning, 3) collecting data regarding needs of teachers, 4) delivering an inservice agenda to meet it, and 5) allowing teachers the opportunity to profile and celebrate their own growth. All in all, the process has been successful and rewarding. The change has taken place over enough time that teachers' have developed their knowledge, skills and confidence.[5]

[1] Joyce, Bruce R., Richard H. Hersh and Michael McKibbin, **The Structure of School Improvement**, Longman, Inc. 1983.

[2] Loucks-Horsley, Susan, Catherine K. Harding, Margaret A. Arbuckle, Lynn B. Murray, Cynthia Dubea and Martha K. Williams, **Continuing to Learn: A Guidebook for Teacher Development**, The Regional Laboratory for Educational Improvement of the Northeast and Islands and The National Staff Development Council, 1987.

[3] Hord, Shirley, William Rutherford, Leslie Hulin-Austin and Gene E. Hall, **Taking Charge of Change**, Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 1987.

[4] Bulter, Andrea, "The Elements of a Whole Language Program, Rigby Press, Crystal Lake, Il.

[5] Little, J.W. "Seductive Images and Organizational Realities in Professional Development." In *Rethinking School Improvement: Research, Craft and Concept. Ann Lieberman (Ed.) New York: Teachers College Press, 1986.*

Figure 1

Levels of Use of Program in Classrooms·

1. Non-Use

State in which the teacher has little or no knowledge of the program, no involvement with it, and is doing nothing toward becoming involved.

• Decision Point -- Takes action to learn more detailed information about the program.

2. Orientation

State in which the teacher has acquired or is acquiring information about the program and/or has explored its value and what it will require.

•Decision Point -- Makes a decision to use the program by establishing a time to begin.

3. Preparation

State in which the teacher is preparing for first use of the program.

• Decision Point -- Begins first use of the program.

4. Stages of Use

a. Mechanical Use

State in which the teacher focuses most effort on the short-term, day-to-day use of the innovation with little time for reflection. The teacher is primarily engaged in an attempt to master tasks required to use the program.

• Decision Point -- A routine pattern of use is established.

b. Routine Use

Use of the program is stabilized. Few if any changes are being made in ongoing use. Little preparation or thought is being given to improvement.

- **Decision Point -- Changes are made in the use of the program based on formal or informal evaluation in order to increase student outcomes.**

c. Refinement

State in which the teacher varies the use of the program to increase the impact on students. Variations in use are based on knowledge of both short and long-term consequences.

- **Decision Point -- Changes are initiated in the use of the program based on input from and in coordination with colleagues for the benefit of the students.**

d. Integration

State in which the teacher is combining their own efforts to use the program with those of their colleagues to achieve a greater impact on the students.

- **Decision Point -- Begins exploring alternatives to or major modifications of the program in use.**

e. Renewal

State in which the teacher reevaluates the quality of use of the program, seeks major modifications of, or alternatives to, present program to achieve increased impact on students. Also, examines new developments in the field, and explores new goals for self and the organization.

Figure 2

Grade _____School_____

Primary Language and Literacy Questionnaire

Please answer the questions below in regard to your implementation of our language and literacy program. The categories are taken from "The Elements of the Whole Language Program" by Andrea Butler.

Reading to Children

1. Do you read to your students daily (or nearly every day)? Yes No

   If **no**, answer **only** questions #2 & 3.
   If **yes, do not** answer questions #2 & #3, go on to answer #4

2. Have you decided to begin reading to your students daily and have set an approximate date to begin? Yes No

3. Are you currently looking for information and/or training about daily reading to your students? Yes No

4. If you are currently reading to your students daily, please circle the statement below that best describes you:
   a. I have just begun daily reading to my students.
   b. I have established a routine pattern of daily reading to my students.
   c. I have been reading daily to my students, but I have discovered that I get better results by changing my routine.
   d. I have been reading daily to my students, and through work with my colleagues, we have made improvements.
   e. I have been reading daily to my students and now I am exploring alternatives to achieve the best possible results .

Figure 3

Elements of a Whole Language Program by Andrea Butler

- **Reading to Children** -- Daily reading aloud to children in a happy, relaxed atmosphere.

- **Shared Book Experience** -- A cooperative language activity which involves a teacher and a whole class of children sitting close together while they share in the reading and re-reading of appealing rhymes, songs, poems, and, of course, stories.

- **Sustained Silent Reading (SSR) --** An activity in which everyone, including the teacher, simply reads for an extended period of time.

- **Guided Reading** -- The main teaching technique of a whole language program. It is the time when the teacher works with a *small* group of 8 to 10 children to delve deeply into books and ideas. It is the time to teach.

- **Individualized Reading --** Children work at their own pace on material particularly suited to their needs and instructional level. Individualized reading is an organizational alternative to guided reading, and, ideally, grows out of guided reading.

- **Language Experience --** A method of teaching that is based on the language generated *orally* by the children during a first-hand or vicarious experience. This oral language is recorded either by the children concerned, by a scribe, or on audio cassette. It is then made available to the children in a written format that is neat and readable.

- **The Writing Process --** A process in which a writer moves through "stages" that are never a neat sequence of steps; rather, a writer moves tc and fro through them, interactively or recursively.

- **Modeled Writing --** An opportunity for children to see and hear an "expert" writer in action. It involves composing in front of children, articulating the processes they are going through, and explaining why they are doing what they are doing. It can also take the form of teachers writing as they and the students compose text collaboratively.

- **Opportunities for Student Sharing --** The opportunity to present a finished piece of work to an audience. It is the time to perform, to read a favorite part of a story in an expressive voice; to deliver a report, to present a rehearsed play; to read that final draft. It is the time for getting feedback from one's peers.

- **Content Area Reading and Writing --** Each content area places its own unique demands on the reader and writer. The learner/reader/writer needs the same supportive conditions for learning when writing a social studies essay as when writing personal narrative. The importance of modeling **how** and **what** to write in each curriculum area cannot be over-emphasized. Typically, we focus our reading and writing on narrative, forgetting the importance of expository text and the demands it makes.

Figure 4

Battle Ground Public Schools
Battle Ground, WA 98604

Language and Literacy Questionnaire

Conclusions

June 1990

Of the 112 primary teachers surveyed:

- **99%** are reading to children daily (or nearly everyday).
- **86%** are holding shared book experiences with their students.
- **91%** are providing time for sustained silent reading (SSR).
- **82%** are using guided reading as their main teaching time.
- **78%** are individualizing reading for students.
- **74%** are teaching through the language experience method.
- **98%** are teaching the writing process.
- **84%** are using experts to model writing for students.
- **98%** are creating opportunities for student sharing of their work.
- **88%** are teaching reading and writing in the content areas.

These are fantastic results. Congratulations!

FIGURE 5

Name_____

LANGUAGE AND LITERACY INDIVIDUAL PROFILE

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K
1		READ ALOUD	SHRD BK EXP	SSR	GUIDED RDNG	INDV RDNG	LANG EXP	WRTNG PRCS	MOLD WRTNG	STDNT SHRNG	CNTNT R & W
2	#1: NON-USE										
3											
4	#2: ORIENTATION										
5											
6	#3: PREPARATION										
7											
8	# 4										
9	a.: MECHANICAL USE										
10											
11	b.: ROUTINE										
12											
13	c.: REFINEMENT										
14											
15	d.: INTEGRATION										
16											
17	e.: RENEWAL										
18											